

# Idaho Logging Safety News

Published quarterly in the interest of logging safety by the  
Division of Building Safety, Logging Safety Bureau

Dirk Kempthorne, Governor  
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I reported to you in the last newsletter that we had had an excellent summer in terms of accidents in the woods.

Boy, did the bubble break in September. In about a two-week time period there were three logging fatalities in the state plus a couple of truck driving fatalities on the highways. As with most bad accidents, the things that happen are usually not ordinary, and in some cases, almost weird. They bring back the saying all to clearly---- what a difference a few inches make!

Obviously, we may not always be able to control what causes the accidents, but we have considerable control over what happens with the emergency rescue operation. We always check on the accidents to see if there was something that could have been done better to make the outcome different. In talking with the different crew members where the accidents occurred

there was one thing that they all said, *"It seemed like it took forever for the helicopter to arrive"*! We checked with State Comm. to see how things actually went. Re-



member, they record every call. What we found out was that the loggers did an excellent job and so did State Comm. The reality of the situation is that it will probably take in the neighborhood of 45 minutes to an hour from your call until a helicopter is on your job. In nearly every case the closest helicopter was not dispatched. Either they were not available or weather conditions would not allow them to fly. Consequently, by calling State Comm., within minutes they had the next available helicopter enroute.

We talked with the rescue folks and there were several things that they reminded us to tell you that could save valuable minutes with the rescue and insure better success:

? Call State Comm. One call and one phone number will handle the situation.

? The more information you can give the better. Stay on the line if possible to update weather conditions. Is it foggy? Is it raining or snowing? Are the weather conditions changing? What type of injuries do you think you have? Are there head injuries, back injuries, internal injuries? This may affect the personnel that they bring and the extra equipment that may be added.

? Someone needs to step up and take charge of the first aid until help arrives. In the initial assessment Airways, Breathing, Circulation and Deadly Bleeding need to be attended to. **TIME IS CRITICAL!** Special care needs to be taken with suspected neck and back injuries. Keeping the patient comfortable and aware of what's going on is critical in the initial treatment for shock.

? Having a GPS reading of the job location for the helicopter is very important. They also said that having a GPS reading of the exact landing site can save **VALUABLE** minutes in the rescue operation

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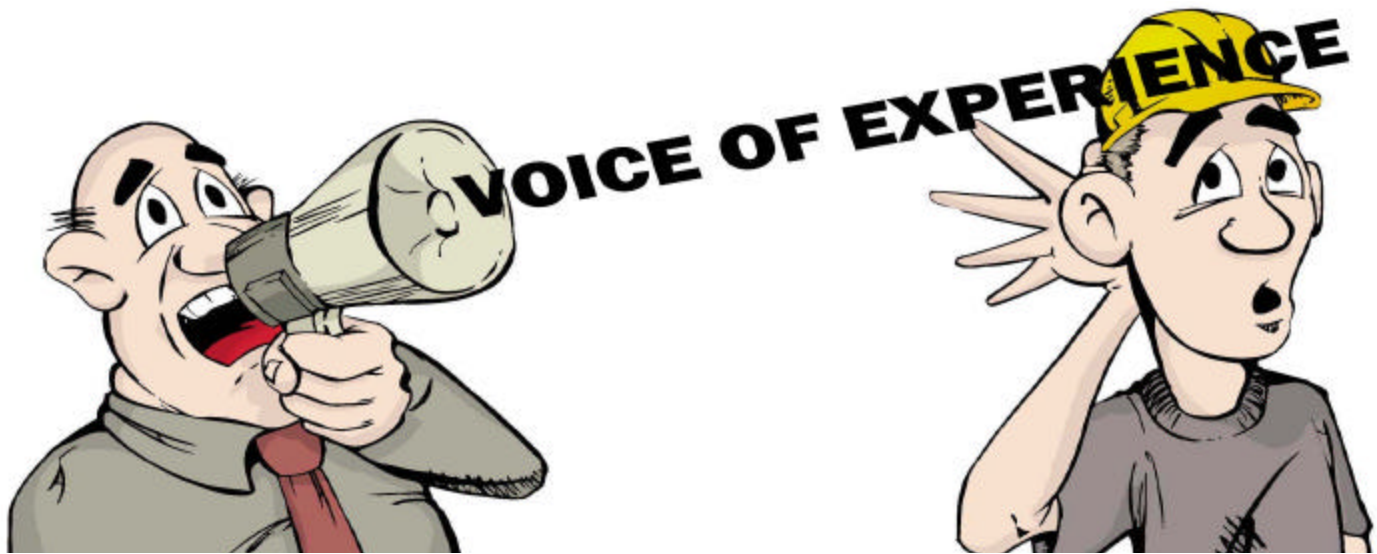
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(this is one that could change daily and one that we have not stressed but certainly makes sense). Knowing which direction to approach from and wind conditions will also help. Put yourself in the position of the pilot who has never been there before.

? As we head into winter and possible bad weather conditions, rescue may be delayed. If they can't get to you, you may need to get the injured person to them. This is a tough call but a critical one. Be realistic. If only the ground ambulance can come, can you keep the patient in stable condition until they arrive?

I realize that these are things that have been covered before but they are important and need to be discussed from time to time. Nobody ever expects to be the one to have a bad accident. I can tell you that the bad accidents that occurred happened to good logging outfits and to people that had considerable experience. Nobody expects it to happen. **BE PREPARED!!!** ?



A logger friend of mine pointed out a safety concern to me the other day that I thought was worth passing along. This fellow has wrestled logs of every shape, size and species over all types of ground for more years than he might want to admit, so I have a tendency to listen to him.

His concern was handling tree lengths. With most of the logging companies in smaller wood these days, many leave the tree whole until it reaches the landing. This logger's point was that handling tree lengths affects so much more area than we are used to. I know that is not earth shattering news to most of you, but it is worth thinking about.

"We used to wait until the hookers or landing men got out of the way to skid or swing a 33 foot log. Now the hookers and landing men are getting about the same distance out of the way and we are skidding or swinging a 100 foot tree length."

Because many companies are shovel logging and bunching this smaller timber or even turning the tree lengths around in the landing, my logger friend wanted me to mention this. *"When you are heeling these tree lengths high enough to get them over the standing timber it is very easy to have them slip out of the heel rack and loose control of them. The tops hit something out there 80 feet away and over sideways it goes onto one of the crew. The boys on the ground have to watch so much more area than they used to."*

Not bad information to remind the crew about. What was that old saying, *"There are old loggers and there are bold loggers but not too many **OLD, BOLD LOGGERS!**"* ?

# Carson Helicopter

Ed has been around the woods for a long time and really understands the importance of having a good Emergency Evacuation Plan in place. When you have a man lying out on the side of the hill hurt, it is really important to know exactly who to call and how to get a hold of them. Even though they have access to their own helicopter Ed likes the idea of getting a medical helicopter to an accident site as soon as possible, because of the medically trained people that come along with it.

As far as first-aid equipment goes he not only had all the usual items, but also had added others that proved he had really thought this deal out. Ed has been around some accidents in cold weather that convinced him of the importance of a good wool blanket. Along with the blanket he also added a tarp to his kit, which he said really comes in handy when you are trying to keep an injured fellow comfortable in a snowstorm. Duct tape, alcohol (disinfectant) and sanitary napkins (for saw cuts) were also ingredients he considered invaluable.

He also had a bag with some pulleys and a couple of hundred feet of good rope in it. *"You can tie it off to a backboard and put a couple of loggers on the other end of the rope and have a fellow out of a hole in a jiffy,"* Ed reported. He told me about an automobile accident he had come upon a few years earlier. The guy was lying at the base of a cliff that was ice covered. Ed put on his corks and over the bank he went. Because of the ice he was the only one that could reach the victim. The emergency responders lowered their backboard with Ed's rope and pulleys. He said after he tied the rope to the front of the board he held on to the other end of it and just leaned back. Up the cliff they went as easy as anything with Ed balancing the board.

Recently, Ed told me that he had just received a brand new backboard/basket. It looked pretty groovy to me. Ed however, had some concerns. He showed me that it had metal braces that ran crossways on the bottom of it. For you guys that have packed an injured logger out of the woods you know that much of the "packing" is just sliding them up or down the hill, especially in the snow. *"Those braces will make it hard to slide"*, Ed stated, *"I can fix it!"*

The best part of my job is meeting loggers. Most are great guys and many are true logging professionals. Ed belongs in both of these columns.  
?







## A SAD LONG MONTH

As you may notice there is no cartoon in this winter's logging safety newsletter. The reason for this is because we went through a month this fall that there wasn't much to laugh at. We lost several loggers in tragic accidents around the state along with a few older loggers passing on.

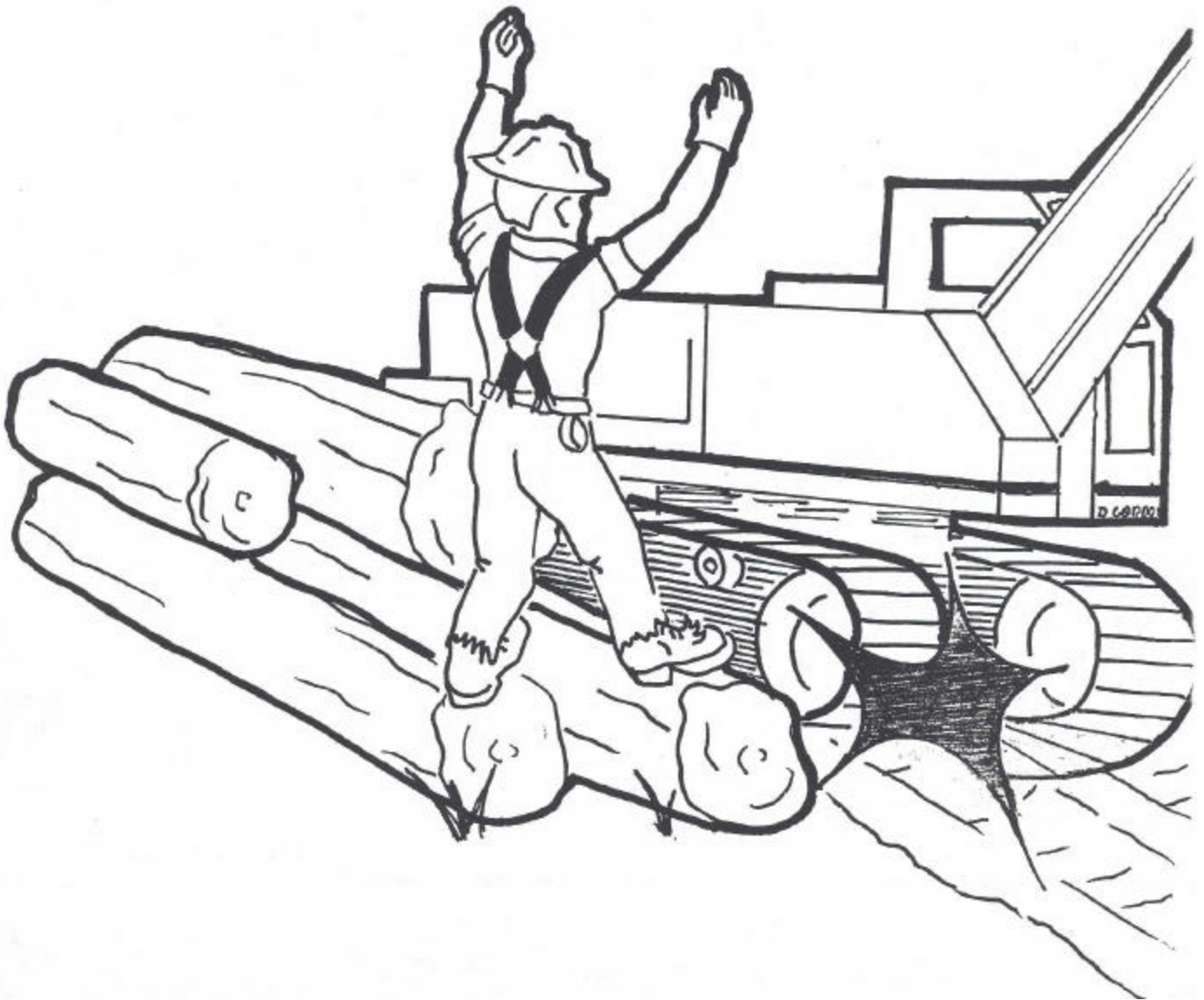
Even though timber is one of the largest, wide spread industries in our state, when horrible things happen in a logging community the state becomes suddenly smaller almost overnight. Loggers from all over the state feel the pain as if it happened on their own job. Loggers are perceived by many to be cold, hard, non-caring people. In all honesty, this could not be farther from the truth. I don't know if it is because they have bounced down the same roads together, crawled through the same brush or skidded the same logs, when tragedy happens they grieve mightily. Loggers know how honorable, unforgiving and hard work this profession is, so perhaps they also grieve out of respect.

I hope the parking lots full of logging trucks and the overflowing funerals from literally one end of the state to the other, helped the families out in some small way. As a logger said the other day, "When you look at it, the only things that are important are your family and friends". I think loggers have the best of both!

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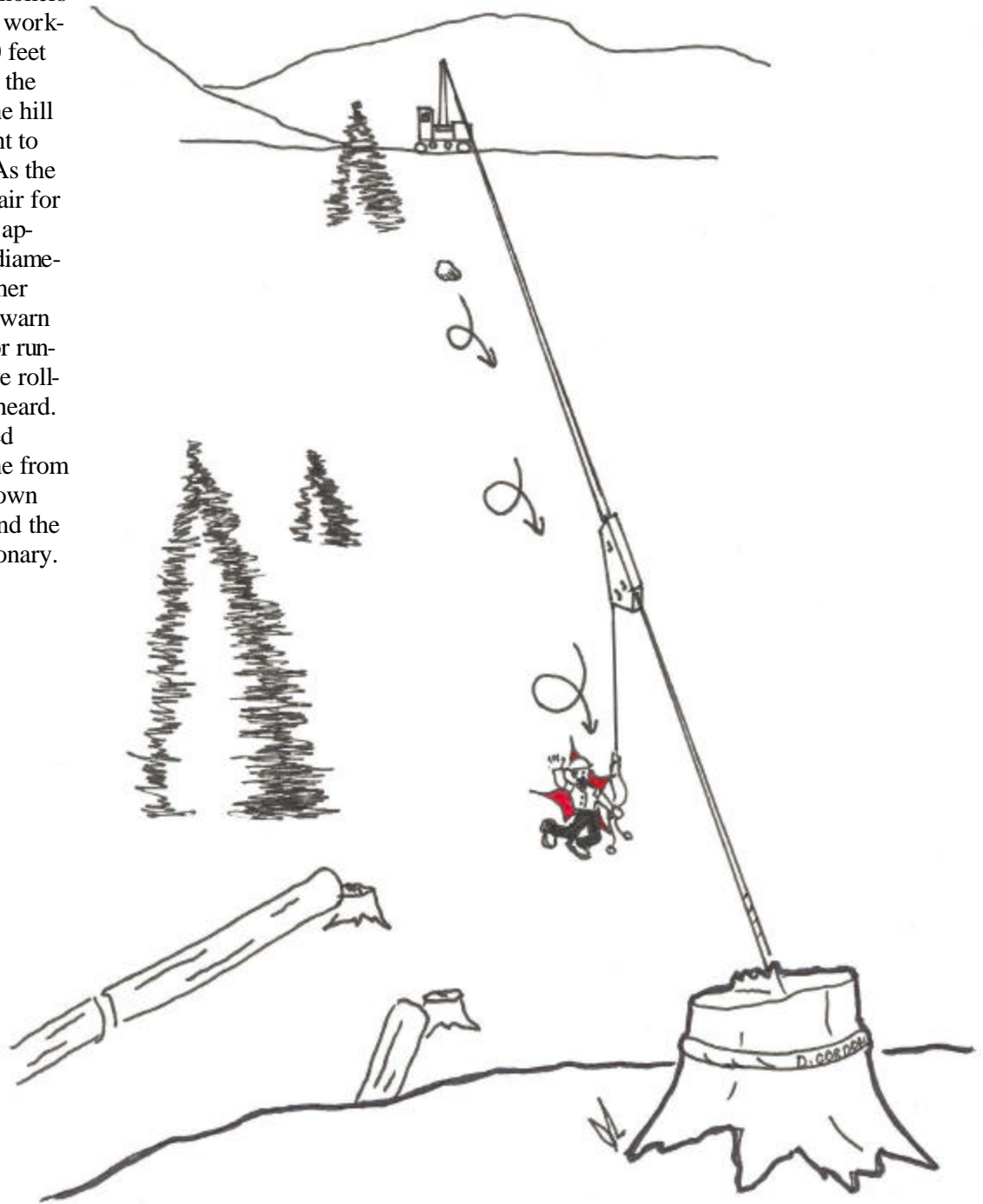
# LOGGING FATALITY #1

September 14, 2004 ~ This fatality occurred on a line skidding job. The crew was skidding tree lengths and the loader was taking the tree lengths away from the machine and decking them on the right side of the road. The two landing sawyers were waiting on the left side as the loader sorted logs. One of the sawyers crossed the road to start bucking the tree lengths. As the loader carried a couple of log lengths down the road with the boom swung to the left, the second sawyer attempted to cross the road. Either he slipped and fell (it was very muddy) or he got his back to the machine and didn't realize how close it was, but he ended up with the loader on top of his lower body.

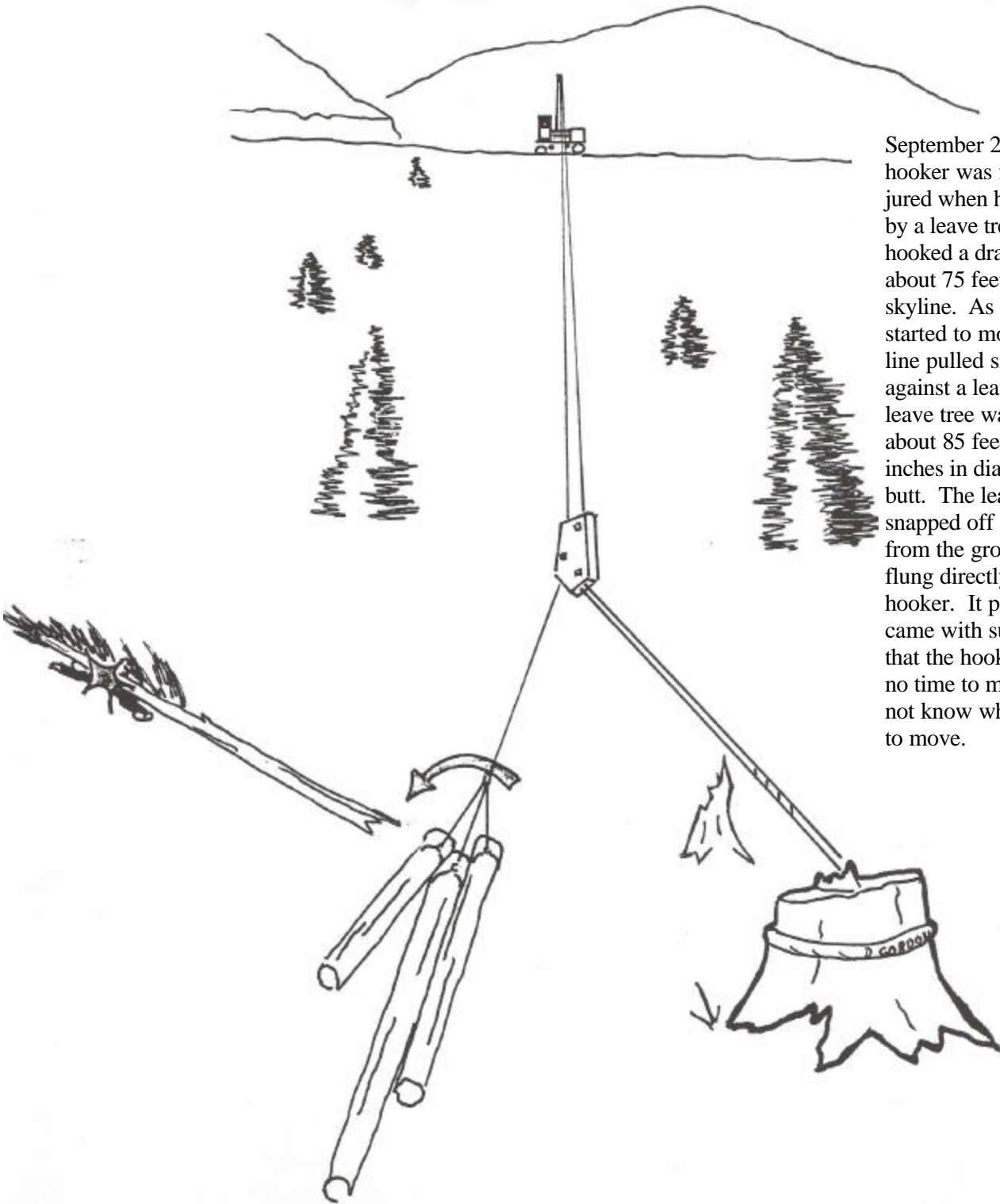


# LOGGING FATALITY #2

September 21, 2004 ~ Two hookers were setting chokers for a line machine and working approximately 500 feet below the landing. As the carriage came down the hill one of the hookers went to retrieve the chokers. As the hooker reached in the air for the chokers, a boulder approximately 4 foot in diameter struck him. The other hooker had no time to warn him and with the motor running on the carriage the rolling rock could not be heard. It was never determined where the boulder came from since the loader was down the road sorting logs and the line machine was stationary.



# LOGGING FATALITY #3



September 23, 2004 ~ A hooker was fatally injured when he was struck by a leave tree. He had hooked a drag and was about 75 feet from the skyline. As the drag started to move, the skyline pulled sideways against a leave tree. The leave tree was a pine about 85 feet tall and 10 inches in diameter at the butt. The leave tree snapped off about 4 feet from the ground and was flung directly at the hooker. It probably came with such speed that the hooker had either no time to move or did not know which direction to move.



# GUIDELINES FOR RIGGING

*By Cliff Osborne*

Through my travels to numerous line skidding jobs I have come to realize the many variations in the type, size and capability of the yarders used in Idaho. Some machines such as Skagits, Madils, Thunderbirds and Diamond D's were manufactured specifically for yarding and were engineered to meet safety factors required for rigging. The most common yarders are craning and dragline machines like link-belts and Bucyress Erie's that have been rebuilt into line skidders.

Occasionally, loggers have had problems holding their machines on the road because of guy line failure. First of all, a guy line is only as good as what you're tied to, be it a stump or some artificial anchor. What size guy line should be used in relation to the mainline is directly related to the following features:

? Angle of guy line from the machine--Guy lines greater than 60 degrees will be considered less than 50% effective.

? Height of gantry to boom height if a gantry is used--The shorter the gantry compared to the boom height, the less efficient the system becomes.

? The boom angle of 60 degrees to 78 degrees is best.

All the state safety codes recommend that you use manufacturers recommendations for guying line machines. If the machine has been re-engineered, then checking into what size guy lines are necessary is a must. Doubling the size of a guy line compared to the size of the mainline may only give a 30% safety factor over the mainline cable.

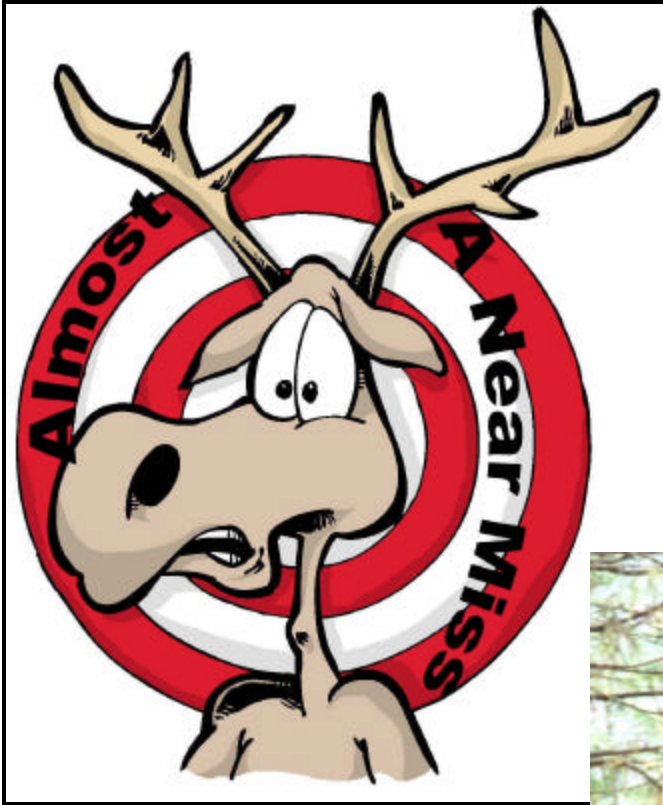
Different boom heights, gantry heights, counterweight size and rubber mounts with outriggers versus track mounts, are all variables affecting machine stability. Making sure you're operating with a safety factor is important.



I realize that many of you have been operating the same machine for years and guying the machine properly is old hat. However, there are some of you that are just getting into the line skidding business and some research may be required to make sure you are setting up properly so the machine doesn't end up on it's top injuring someone in the process.

These machines, belonging to Mark Darby, a GT Skagit on the left which has manufacturers guying specs and a Komatsu back hoe (above) with 98 link belt drums engineered so it doesn't need any guylines. You're probably somewhere in between.





With all the bad news that we encountered this quarter I thought it was time for something a little bit lighter. One of our Idaho loggers, Steve Schilling from Kooskia, had what many would call an extremely lucky day, although I'm sure his thoughts might lean more toward the skill side. Steve almost had a near miss but ended up bagging this 9 point-- **that's right-- 9 point bull.** I didn't know they came that big. Steve is a timber faller for Mark Swanson Logging and I'm guessing he did a little better than the boss (sorry Mark). Steve said that their hunting party got 7 elk, and----backpacked them all out. *Oh, to be young again.* By the way, that's slightly more than what came through our camp. NICE JOB STEVE!!

## ACCIDENT

A logger received serious injuries while operating a rubber-tired skidder. The operator stopped to hook up a drag. He lowered the blade, but being in a hurry, forgot to hit the air valve to set the brake. As he dove off of the machine his suspenders caught the blade lever. The blade came up and released the skidder just as he left the machine. You can guess the rest. The skidder tire with chains was on top of him in a second. This operator is still trying to recover from the accident.



## CHECKING ON THE CREW



I want to start out saying that 99.9% of the time you guys do a great job checking to make sure that everybody on the crew is doing fine. Your companies have come up with common sense ways of keeping tabs on the guys throughout the day and making sure they get out of the woods at night, and I thank you for that. This is just a reminder that when something out of the ordinary happens, those people still need to be checked on.

Timber fallers are probably the first to come to mind. For numerous reasons, every so often I find a faller out working by himself. You and the crew are working your tails off, with about a million things going on, and all of a sudden it is quitting time and nobody has checked on the saw all day.

You might have a cat skinner finishing up ditching the last job by himself or a processor operator working odd hours trying to get logs in the deck for the next day. With snow coming on, someone will be out on the grader at all hours trying to have the road cleared for morning. In situations like these, along with the lone faller, some type of plan (ALONG WITH RADIOS) is a good idea.

I hear from some loggers' things like, *"I don't mind working alone"* or *"I been doing it this way for years"*, and I respect that. It is just my job as a professional logging safety geek to say, *"Bad crap does happen boys!"*

I would also like to go out on a limb and predict that there will be snow and cold weather this winter. Having someone lying out there hurt for any length of time is a bad deal, but in cold weather it can get serious in a hurry. ?

## ACCIDENT

This accident happened in north Idaho a number of years ago and I thought it was worth mentioning. A young man was falling trees on a line strip late in the day. It was nearly quitting time and only he and the boss were left on the job when the bad thing happened. The sawyer was working below a 20 inch log left by the road building crew. For whatever reason the log came loose and shot down the hill striking the faller. Luckily it knocked him down behind a stump. The bad news was that the stump had been cut extremely low and when the log went over him, it crushed his pelvis and did a lot of internal damage.

This sawyer has not worked in the woods since. His advice is simple. If you recognize something that has a possibility of going wrong, figure out another way to do it!



Logging truck driver Levi Biggers stands next to his tire chain hangers. If you look closely you will notice they are covered. Not only does this make a heck of a good step, it also covers those sharp "hooks" that can do so much damage if someone falls on them. Levi said they use them a lot on highway trucks so they can padlock their chains up to keep from getting them stolen. I have not heard too much problem with theft, but I think I can still hear a few truckers howling after they land on those hooks!



## ACCIDENT

A hooker from North Idaho got his head pinned between two trees when he was rehooking a drag. One of the trees was in a bind. The logger did not realize that fact and while unhooking the choker, the tree sprang sideways smashing him in the head. The injured hooker was flown out by helicopter where he was treated for a broken jaw and a bruised skull.





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